June 10, 2003

TO: NITC Commissioners

FROM: Steve Schafer

SUBJECT: **Security Initiatives Update**

This is an update on current activities regarding security.

1. SECURITY WORK GROUP

The Security Work Group (http://www.nitc.state.ne.us/tp/workgroups/security/index.htm) has met four times since January. We are finishing security guidelines on two topics: wireless networks and remote access and will forward recommendations to the Technical Panel in July. Future subjects of interest include secure communications, SPAM control, creating regional Computer Incident Response Team, developing minimum security requirements for agencies, and preparing a strategic plan to guide the work of the committee.

2. AUTHENTICATION

Two initiatives are in progress. The Information Management Services Division has purchased software for deploying an LDAP-compatible directory services. A work group of the State Government Council (http://www.nitc.state.ne.us/sgc/workgroups/directory/index.html) is making recommendations for standard procedures for data classification, access, resetting passwords, and other implementation issues.

The other initiative will provide a means for authentication of users over the Internet for applications that require a legal signature. The system will use the directory services application above and will verify a person's identify against information already in state databases, such as drivers license data or Department of Revenue data.

3. AWARENESS / TRAINING

Using a grant from the Government Technology Collaboration Fund, IMServices evaluated a web-based solution for providing basic security training to a large number of users. The "Managed Ongoing Awareness Training" program integrates security training with policy management, reporting, tracking & change management. Over 700 people used the training on a trial basis. Results were generally positive – almost 90% of those responding to an evaluation survey rated the training as good, very good, or excellent. The application permits each agency to add unique policies to the training modules. It also keeps track of who has completed which sections of the training program.

The cost of the program is $6 per user, with hosting by IMServices, if we purchase an enterprise license for 8,000 users. We are now determining what agencies are interested in participating.

4. BUSINESS CONTINUITY / DISASTER RECOVERY

The Nebraska Emergency Management Agency recently revised the State Emergency Operations Plan, which guides the state's emergency response activities. The new version recognizes the importance of continuity of government and requires "each state agency and local government to develop a continuity of operations plan (COOP) and a disaster plan for information technology." It also requires agencies to follow the NITC's guidelines for disaster recovery planning (http://www.nitc.state.ne.us/standards/index.html). With recent funding from the state's Homeland Security grant, the Department of Administrative Services and the State's Chief Information Officer will lead a multi-agency effort to comply with this requirement.

5. NETWORK VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT

Using a grant from the State Government Collaboration Fund, the CIO has hired a network security firm to conduct an external vulnerability assessment of the state's network. Findings and recommendations will be available in July.

6. SECURE COMMUNICATIONS

Several state agencies are exploring different options to provide secure e-mail and other electronic communications among state agencies and between state agencies and business partners.   They will present draft standards to the Security Work Group for consideration.